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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the impact of film and television stories on prospective teachers and the ways in which popular culture has influenced ideas formed about teaching roles and schooling. Questions about teachers' beliefs and how teachers see the practice of schooling are integral to curriculum planning and reform in preservice teacher education. This paper suggests that preservice teachers might benefit from the opportunity to examine the ways in which they have come to define their role as teachers, and what it means to teach. Knowledge resulting from experience and reflection may begin the educational process. Using popular film and television stories provides an opportunity to enhance the study of culture in teacher education. Recognizing what one believes is important, and understanding how those beliefs impinge upon future practice may depend on how teacher education is approached. A cultural approach which combines professional reading with television and film stories can provide a means to discover truths about the self and to provoke reflection. (LL)

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"Stories of Schooling in Films and Television: A Cultural Studies Approach to Teacher Education"

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"You must strive to find your voice."

"Dare to strike out and find new ground."

"Talk hard."

"School is discipline, control, and fear."

"Trust that your beliefs are your -- unique, important -- swim against the stream."

"If you want to change, you've got to do it from the inside."

"All I know is that I know nothing."

"Possessing a hungry mind is not a guarantee of success."

"Not everyone wants to be a star."

"They expected me to learn their language; they never bothered to learn mine."

"Garbage never leaves the dump."

"You come down off the roof, you got nothing but pigeon crap on your shoes."

"You treat them like animals, that's exactly how they'll behave."

"Discipline is not the enemy of enthusiasm."

"You are not only a rotten teacher; you are immoral."

"Treat them adults; they'll behave like adults."

"I've always been of the opinion that children should be allowed to show their creativity."

"Your voices have been heard."

Regardless of how we take these quotes from a variety of movies and television programs, one thing is sure; popular media tend to show us *one* vision of schooling, and it is powerful. That vision, despite all our efforts to change it, is largely negative, authoritarian, skill driven, uncaring. When we do occasionally see a teacher, like Mr. Keating in Dead Poets Society, whose character addresses some important educational concerns (i.e., thinking for oneself, risk-taking, and the pursuit of excellence), that role is often extreme and romanticized. In an article published in English Journal, Mark Collins says, "The teacher wins over the class/audience by the sheer force of humor, visible energy, confidence, and a passion for words" (74). Though Keating stands on his desk to remind himself that he "must constantly look at things in a different way," he looks at a privileged class -- thus his vision is limited. Within the context of Dead Poets Society, the audience does not see a view of teachers consonant with a multicultural world. Nontraditional to be sure, Keating still reflects all the worst stereotypes of English teachers. Like Miss Jean Brody (The Prime of Miss Jean Brody), Keating favors cultural elitism in his canonical approach to literature, an approach in keeping with E. D. Hirsch, Jr.'s vision of cultural literacy. With Keating's ability to work students into a frenzy, he could have had revolutionaries had they been fighting for a cause. Instead, they were becoming "members of the club," perpetuating dominant class interests. And Keating's punishment after Neal's suicide

serves only to reinforce society's notions that schools must be strict, rule enforcing agencies where its members, from teachers to pupils, must be controlled.

Juxtaposing this film with a reading by Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux entitled "Schooling, Culture, and Literacy" may help students begin to dismantle inequitable structures dramatized by a classist portrait of schooling in which knowledge and history are "merely an artifact, a warehouse of goods, posited either as a canon of knowledge or a canon of information that has simply to be transmitted as a means of promoting social order and control" (91). This passage alludes to E. D. Hirsch, Jr.'s Cultural Literacy and Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind (whose work many, if not most, education students encounter much earlier than in my classes) and, in particular, seems to draw on the literacy focus shown in the film:

> Hirsch and Bloom share a common concern for rewriting history from the perspective of the privileged and the powerful. In this view, history becomes a vehicle for endorsing a form of cultural authority that legitimates an unproblematic relationship between knowledge and truth. Both disdain the democratic implications of pluralism, and each argues for a form of cultural uniformity in which difference is consigned to the margins of both history and everyday life. . . . Learning is defined primarily through a pedagogy of transmission, and knowledge is reduced to a culture of

> great books and unrelated catalogues of shared information. . . .Their positions [seek] to restore knowledge as a particular form of social authority, pedagogy, and discipline in the classroom. . . .Each . . .espouses a view of culture removed from the trappings of power, conflict, and struggle, and in doing so, each attempts to legitimate a view of learning and literacy that marginalizes the voices, languages, and cultures of subordinate groups but also degrades teaching and learning to the practice of implementation and mastery. (91)

Additionally, I might juxtapose Giroux's article on "Critical Literacy and Student Experience" in order to further illuminate the notion of self-determined thinking. For example, Keating's call for students to think for themselves needs to be examined in the particular context of what that thinking might mean. Is living for the moment and thinking for oneself the same? Or can we say that thinking for oneself involves a more critical act? These and other questions are entertained within the corpus of critical texts and media selections discussed in this essay.

Stories of Schooling and the Developing Teacher

Many of the ideas prospective teachers have about their roles as teachers and about schooling, in general, are developed long before they enter teacher education programs. To examine new approaches to curriculum and not take into account students' "personal knowledge" (Polanyi) has traditionally been a blindspot

in teacher reform movements. Therefore, in looking at ways in which teachers' personal knowledge is shaped, I shall consider personal experience and the impact of stories of schooling in films and television.

Since teachers' beliefs are often based upon experiences prior to teaching, dispositions, feelings, guiding images, and principles may have a cumulative effect on students' developing teacher selves (Butt and Raymond). William Pinar refers to this phenomenon as the "architecture of self" or the integration of those beliefs and values from past experience. This suggests that teachers, especially prospective teachers, might benefit from the opportunity to examine the ways in which they have come to define their role as teachers -- what it means to teach. Educative activities that lead students to reflect upon their past experiences in order to discover what is most valuable and what will best serve them as teachers may provide significant learning. That is, knowledge resulting from experience and reflection may *begin* the educational process.

I define reflection here as a "space" in which assumptions are questioned against a backdrop of experience -- where multiple voices are valued and where persons engaging in reflection are open to multiple readings of the world (Bakhtin; Freire and Macedo). Reflection then signals "dialogical inquiry," a term used by Shor and Freire to suggest inquiry that is situated in "culture, language, [and] politics" (104); it signals a

willingness to examine the unexamined; it signals the act of puzzling-out experience to see its many sides.

Using popular films and television to enhance the study of culture in teacher education may provide the opportunity for dialogical inquiry. Moreover, studying culture reinforces the Gramscian notion that society is also a school -- that, in fact, we learn position (i.e., subordination/domination) from the legitimized forms of social relations evident throughout society. From Gramsci this is made particularly evident when we consider his position, that he is writing from inside his prison cell, from the inside out, as it were.

In Landscapes of Learning, Maxine Greene argues that an engagement with literature and the arts connects us with the past as it reminds us of the ways in which we bring meaning into being. And Margaret Buchman writes that "contemplative" response to literature may effect teacher thinking more than any other single teaching enterprise (203). Contemplation which may include critical/reflective assessment of both literature and other aesthetic media like films and television may, indeed, be integral to the development of a reflective teacher self. Thus as Dewey suggests, a "fusion of the intellectual and the emotional" may be required for reflection (118).

Encompassed in the desire to have teachers-to-be see themselves as culture makers, reflecting upon and questioning the dominant images of teachers and schooling, then, is a view of teacher education that includes cultural studies. However, this

view is not based upon the perceived need to include a particular "body of cultural knowledge." Rather it is associated with the need to provide a variety of materials that can help teachers see themselves as "intrinsically involved with that which has to be done" (Giddens 4) -- as having human agency to make change, especially in education. It is not a deterministic view of culture but an emergent one (Williams, Marxism). This view means, of course, that we as culture makers need to resist images of prevailing practices, especially within the culture of schools. It means that we recognize not only that knowledge is socially constructed, but that we, ourselves, our positions, are socially constructed (Foucault, Kelly). The need then to move beyond current "job training" images of teacher education leads the way for programatic changes that include cultural studies -- in this instance through film and television texts.

Criteria for selecting films and television used in this discussion are two: First, those selected dramatize schooling situations, and second, no selection represents an ideal; rather each offers a range of schooling environments with a range of teaching and learning styles. What is common is that all provide rich areas for critique and all are capable of moving us to visions of alternative possibilities for schooling arrangements and practices. The necessity to remain open, to let the story work toward raising critical questions is extremely important. As literature calls forth a reader to reflection, critically

viewing film and television selections can lead the viewer to response and reflection.

Through inquiry and reflection in an extensive study of stories of schooling read in parity with professional texts, teachers may be helped to test, if not dismantle, many preconceived assumptions about teaching as they develop a greater capacity for understanding the meanings students make of schooling. This is important for several reasons. First, understanding how multicultural (and all) students make sense of curriculum (and in particular, how students learn to read and write) renders a teacher far more capable of making important decisions about pedagogy and content. On the other hand, until teachers know what they believe about teaching and learning, reflect upon that, and see themselves in relation to other students, teachers, and administrators, they may be incapable of offering a rationale for the form and content of their classrooms. Moreover, without some understanding of how schools as institutions tend to structure inequality, teachers may neither have the ability nor the desire to begin to change inequitable situations that mediate against students' learning, even in their own classrooms. Readings, including film and television texts, that help teachers-to-be develop what Maxine Greene calls a "committed rationality" through a socio-political and cultural awareness of teaching and learning may, indeed, lead to reflective practice.

Therefore, as we seek to redefine teacher education, I suggest we consider a curriculum that pairs stories of schooling in films and television with readings that display a variety of critical social theories of education. Dramatizations of schooling situate for students issues of class, race, and gender and make more accessible theories of resistance, hidden curriculum, politics of student voice and position, power and its distribution, relationships between school and society, and the social construction of knowledge.

Thus my work combines the vision of critical educators who propose cultural studies (see, for example, Giroux, Shumway, Smith, and Sosnoski) with Maxine Greene and others who propose that teacher education include literature and the arts as a vehicle for reflection. Further I draw on the work of Raymond Williams who suggests that all of culture can be viewed through television and films; film and television media show "intense particular worlds. . . under stress, in conflict, in personal isolation, in dream or in nightmare (Television 57).

Pairing Disparate Texts

In addition, I borrow somewhat from a new critical movement, "New Historicism," which argues for the pairing of unlike texts in order to make more obvious the historical moment from which canonical texts as well as popular texts emerge, including films and television. New historical perspectives seek to discover elements in history that explain literature and the complicated relationship between the two. I diverge from this perspective in

that I use literature and the arts to illuminate historically grounded critical educational theory.

As suggested by Michel Foucault, "new historicist," Stephen Greenblatt sees the ambiguity of language as "the supreme instance of a collective creation;" so too is history such an instance of collectivity. Greenblatt explores complex relations between contradictory texts as he trusts "other" texts to illumine the literary work (4). For example, In Shakespearean Negotiations, Greenblatt relies upon Pierre Bourdieu's work on political economy and social reproduction for insights into historical relations between economic interests and cultural and aesthetic interests. Greenblatt terms this enterprise a "poetics of culture;" that is, a "study of the collective making of distinct cultural practices and inquiry into the relations among these practices" (5). I too argue for the pairing of a variety of disparate texts (as in the previous example of Dead Poets Society and the Aronowitz/Giroux text). I too want to guard against further reinforcing culture as a fixed and maintainable instrument of the status quo.

Examples of status quo enculturation are prevalent throughout literary history, especially with respect to narratives which dramatize schooling situations. Texts both represent and delegate authority as they portray schooling events which strongly determine/shape the destinies of school children. For example, in the opening lines of the classic, Madame Bovary, we meet Charles Bovary, a "new boy dressed in ordinary clothes"

who upon entering his new school is so intimidated by classmates and their daily rituals that he is incapable of joining them, is rendered speechless, and is laughed at pathetically (3). The descriptions of Charles and the recitations that were a part of every class are reminiscent of our introduction to Welton Academy and to Neal in Dead Poets Society. Like Charles Bovary, Neal comes from a lower socio-economic class than other boys we meet at Welton. Both stories are tragic, both reveal something of the bondage and human sacrifice from which culture is made, and both show us something about how schools tend to reproduce society along class lines (Apple, Ideology, Bourdieu and Passerson, Giroux, Ideology and Culture) -- where "crossing boundaries," to use Mike Rose's words, is extremely difficult if not impossible. Placing ourselves today in relation to this kind of historical look at schooling, at literacy practices, and at culture creates what Mikhail Bakhtin calls a "dialogic" relation. When a novel or a film text creates a story capable of showing the multivocalic nature of the past, rich with voices from "the people," then and only then in Bakhtin's words is it worthy of being "canonized."

I argue for reading different kinds of texts in parity for purposes of drawing upon multiple voices but also for two other reasons which seem obvious. First, students have a more difficult time viewing Dead Poets Society and other movies (e.g., Lean on Me, Teachers, Educating Rita, etc.) and television programs (e.g., Head of the Class, Parker Lewis Can't Lose, etc.)

critically without benefit of professional readings. And second, critical readings (e.g., Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Literacy: Reading the Word and the World) may be difficult to unpack without situating them in some greater approximation to reality.

Approximating Reality

Movies, like books and television, create a fiction world in which students can become the characters, try on roles they have not experienced in life (Rosenblatt). However, because films and television approximate reality in what Gilles Deleuze (Cinema 1) calls a "privileged instant" (4), we experience that lived-through moment with greater intensity due to the time frame of most movies or television programs. The camera directs our attention to key elements within the narrative, certain movements receive more attention than others, and the plot is easily resovled within the required time limitations.

Even more importantly, we may think of Deleuze's term in reference to the particular privileging effect that the "big screen" has on certain images -- the larger than life effect. With that in mind, Virginia Woolf's notion that the visual narrative holds a "surprising power" is all the more compelling. As events and images are elevated to the status of art, they tend to become privileged beyond question. They hold a power, as Virginia Woolf writes in "The Movies and Reality," that tends to replace logic:

> . . .if so much of our thinking and feeling is connected with seeing, some residue of visual emotion

> which is of no use either to painter or to poet may still await the cinema. That such symbols will be quite unlike the real objects which we see before us seems highly probable. . .[however] the exactitude of reality and its surprising power of suggestion are to be had for the asking. (267)

Georg Lukacs describes the "exactitude of reality" in art as "social realism," or reality capable of being objectified, reality which transcends the here and now, and reality that demands belief. And further drawing on Lukacs, Todd Gitlin says, ". . .symbolic expression[s] through which creators articulate meanings. . .[whether] 'magical' or 'religious'. . .[are] more than imitations or training exercises" (202). Social identities and political statements are made manifest in song and story, in films and television (Gitlin). Additionally, Evan Watkins writes of the particular "intersections of economic, technological, and ideological factors involved in. . .commercial television broadcasting in the U.S." (34). Thus, as if Woolf had prophesied the imapct of the visual image, we are literally, at this moment in history, bombarded with images of schooling in movies and in television. This popular culture representation of the teaching profession, though usually negative, seems to powerfully affect our definitions of schooling. Guiding images from films and televison tend to do more than produce visual emotions, they tend to influence our world views and ideological perspectives as much as representations do from books.

Reading Films and Television

Reading film and television texts seems an important place to begin a project that seeks to redefine schooling practices. Yet Robert Scholes reminds us in Protocols of Reading, "We do not, in ordinary parlance, say that we read films and television (we "view or "watch" them), though semioticians *read* -- or say they read -- such texts all the time" (1). From a semioticians viewpoint, seeing is reading. The assumption, then, that "all the world's a text" (Scholes 1) draws liberally on Jacques Derrida's notion that nothing exist beyond our capacity to read it through signs -- even our gendered selves are constructed from signs we have read. Therefore, from a Derridean perspective, we are challenged to see that no text represents truth but presents fertile ground for raising questions and testing assumptions about life and history.

Both Raymond Williams (Television) and Terry Eagleton support the belief that the particular viewpoint most often presented in texts is one that reinforces a dominant world view. For that reason, film and television texts, like other texts, need to be read with resistance (see Fetterly on the resisting reader). According to Judith Fetterly, Todd Gitlin, and Evan Watkins, literature, films, and television, are so political, confrontive encounters can actually encourage us to pose cultural and ideological "problem-themes" (Shor and Freire) out of our own experiences (e.g., issues of class, race, and gender related to domination/subordination).

According to Bill Nichols, however, we are not in the habit of examining film texts against existing social conditions. For that reason, we tend not to notice the ambiguity of those images that have been captured in the "privileged instant" (Deleuze, Cinema 1 4). To show how a change in context can alter the meaning one ascribes to a particular object, Nichols arranges (on a single page) photos of the same object used in scenes from several movies. In each of the different film clips, the object or focus, a gun, is the same, yet the background or the facial expression of the person holding the gun or even the lighting affects the meanings we ascribe to particular scenes and to the object itself. This illustrates the necessity to examine each text and each image individually against the existing context in order not to attach fixed meanings. Such examination becomes extremely important, then, when the object of the text is teachers, children, or schools. Rather than allowing images to represent a fixed entity, as it so often does, we need to read images semiotically rather than symbolically (Kristeva, Deleuze, Cinema 2); that is, examining "the image's referent at that single instant in time of its capture" (Nichols 57).

Texts and Meaning Making

Examining texts is a part of the meaning-making process. Yet some texts more easily transcend what Lukacs refers to as experiences of the "here and now," or they make readily available what Louise Rosenblatt calls a lived-through or virtual experience. Though professional readings name problems and may

invite readers into a discussion of issues of power and its distribution or raise questions about culture and ideology, still these readings do not often provide adequate example or grounding for the reader to experience the text vicariously. For example, on the topic of women teaching in a patriarchal system, selections from Madeleine Grumet's Bitter Milk or Michael Apple's "Gendered Teaching, Gendered Labor" raise the issue of power differentials within the hierarchy of schools. With this topic, the old television program, Our Miss Brooks, and the movie/book, Up the Down Staircase, as well as the book, The Prime of Miss Jean Brody provide excellent and fully contextualized literary examples of what Grumet and Apple say has traditionally been called "women's work." Yet the latter texts illuminate the problem through narrative conflict and resolution.

Reading/literary theorists argue that the difficulty in reading some texts lies in the form or structure of the text more than with its content. Explication of information versus telling a story seems to be the difference. Narrative, for example, decreases the separation of words we read and worlds we live in (Shor and Freire). While I would argue that a reader's stance can determine the particular reading, some forms may more naturally elicit one kind of reading over another. Literature and other aesthetic texts, for example, arouse passions and are evocative. Further, all of the complexities of teaching which might be addressed in professional readings can also be dealt

with in aesthetic texts but on a level that invites vicarious participation.

The meaning making potential of narrative lies largely in the fact that stories are, as Barbara Hardy says, "a primary act of mind transferred to art from life" (12). Stories draw us into a world, a world that lets us participate. From inside this world we can see how the past is connected with the future. Further, narrative more naturally helps us connect information with experience to construct knowledge (Bruner).

Thus as I argue for the addition of films and television as aesthetic texts to be examined in parity with social critical readings, I am also arguing for a pedagogy that is dialogical. Studying the culture of schooling through a medium or text that is both representational (i.e., dramatizes or represents a particular image) and "productive" (i.e., capable of being shaped through active responding) can act as an invitation to dialogue. In other words, where critical professional readings alone will raise issues or name problems, film and television texts read like literary texts can *illumine* those issues or problems.

Like literature, film and television texts represent various ways of being in the world, often through binary opposites like good/bad, weak/strong, and so forth. As readers understand these representations or images through extentions of their own memory, they approach the text from a particular stance. A traditional portrait of the "good teacher" is one in which the teacher is in *control*. See, for example, the contrasts between teachers in

Dead Poets Society. Both form and content of teaching tend to revolve around the issue of control. Thus it is not hard to imagine how teachers-to-be have determined their roles as teachers. After all, who wants to align themselves with teachers who have noisy classes? Noise in the classroom is traditionally seen as negative -- if not by viewers, then at least by depicted administrators like the controlling principal in "Parker Lewis Can't Lose." A noisy classroom presents a situation in which it is assumed that the teacher has no control (also see, for example, the principal's response to Gabe Kotter's role in "Welcome Back Kotter"). Instead of portraits which depict active learning through student participation, shared responsibilities in the classroom, and so forth, images of schooling have traditionally shown "good students" silently taking notes or raising their hands to speak. A "good classroom" then is assumed to have conforming (if not completely passive) students and a teacher who is always in charge. In the traditional view of schooling, cooperative students do not necessarily signal progressive classrooms because students are not generally cooperating with each other; rather, they are obeying the teacher. See also, for example, the social studies teacher in Ferris Beuller's Day Off who asks questions but allows no response time before answering the questions himself. Instead, he simply says, "Anybody? Anybody?" Typically, only in portraits that present negative images do we see students interacting at all. Or we see overly romanticized versions of

teachers (e.g., Mr. Keating in Dead Poets Society, Alex Jarrell in Teachers), who are heroes in the classroom, taking personal interests in kids' problems and being a friend to everyone. Traditional images do not represent the complexities of teaching, and contemporary images do much to distort teachers' lives. Creating a new stereotype is not the answer. For we cannot define teachers' lives and their work on the basis of a few simple characteristics.

The importance, then, of examining both literature and popular culture representations of schooling may lie in creating the space for students to either accept an image as representational or reject it in favor of a new shaping. The latter, according to Bakhtin, is a reader resisting a single perspective, infusing the reading with his or her own cultural understandings and experience. In this way readers produce a "heteroglossic" text (Bakhtin). That is, though some texts may present history through one voice or one perspective, representing the dominant world view in any single text, as we read, we rewrite that text making it multivocal -- changing its one privileged voice to multiple voices. In other words, our own reading/rewriting gives rise to multiple possibilities "for the "seizing of a range of meanings by persons open to the world" (Greene 169).

Further, according to Scholes, who borrows liberally from Derrida, all text structures demand interpretation, a kind of seeing in which the interpretant constructs a visual text. It is

the reader then who dismantles the language system and opens the text to varying perspectives. Thus, I would argue that reader stance (regardless of text structure) is the key ingredient in meaning making, and when those meanings are mediated through dialogue or what Paulo Freire calls "transformative communication," texts tend to take on a multivocal character.

Raymond Williams treats this interactionist theory of communication thoroughly in Television and the Working Class. He describes an active viewer who mediates response through involvement with a variety of other viewers (e.g., neighbors, work associates, etc.) within a given social context. If teacher education classrooms were the context for such discussions, student viewers would likewise have the opportunity to mediate their responses against a background of critical information. On the other hand, Williams contrasts the interactive model with a linear model that assumes a one-way relationship with an undifferentiated audience. This seems to approximate the situation of prospective teachers without the opportunity to engage in discussion and critique of films and television. It appears to be much easier to accept that a particular image represents *the way things are* when we do not interact with others, exchanging ideas that might inform our meaning making.

Philip Wexler's commentary on the interactive nature of texts may also be applied to films and television. Indebted to literary theory for much of his rendering of the 'new sociology of education,' Wexler suggests that texts are "structures which

produce textual effect," i.e., textual effect can range from an actual text to the interaction between text and reader or the thinking which produces response to the collective recording of historical social life and class struggle (110). Umberto Eco and Wolfgang Iser further elaborate on the importance of viewing texts as productive structures through which readers make meaning. Openness, incompleteness, and contradiction, all features of films and television, call for constructive, interpretive activity -- for futher remaking. Roland Barthes labels such a text the "writerly text" because through it readers are capable of remaking their social, political, and historical realities (5). Construction of new images or a "reconceptualization" of teachers and schooling, to use Pinar and Grumet's term, might well be the outcome of a project that works to create spaces for interactive text making.

And such is my hope when I juxtapose film or television texts with professional readings to examine possibilities for critical/reflective practice. Professional readings alone have proven, at least in my classes, to be inadequate for providing prospective teachers with a necessary framework for understanding the meanings their students may make about themselves and school. For example, while these texts provide useful, even necessary, stimulus for questioning the assumptions in aesthetic texts, they fall short of providing enough context for preservice teachers who have little to no background in schools outside their own experiences as students. Their lack of "teacherly" background

makes many important concepts difficult to understand. No matter the difficulty of concepts like the "culture of silence" or "tracking as a device for reproducing class, gender, and racial inequality," both are, nonetheless, as important for beginning teachers to understand as they are for experienced teachers.

This story may sound familiar. As a first-, second-, third- and even fourth-year teacher, I made many mistakes. I put students through drills that silenced them. I didn't have to separate the brighter students from those who we were told would "slip through the cracks anyway;" my school already had ability grouping in place. These groupings were all too easy to recognize. It largely meant that black students were separated from white and poorly dressed students from those who looked like they'd just stepped off the cover of Vogue. But even with my own working-class background, I participated in this structured inequality. I helped push students farther into the margins. I bought into the notion that we couldn't reach all of the students, that we were there to teacher our subject matter (11th- and 12th-grade English). If students didn't "get it," well, at least, we had done our jobs. Students suffered as a result. In one term alone, I failed over half the students in one English class. The saddest part of this story is that I was proud of my toughness. I did not until much later see that it was I who failed. Yes, I had failed my students, but not by giving them F's. I had failed to be their teacher. I had failed to care. I had failed to see what I was really teaching them and how that

affected their schooling experience. I had failed to see what they were internalizing about themselves; I had failed to hear what their silence spoke. I had failed to see the tracks or classist structures I was reproducing in my own classroom. My good students who came from well-to-do families were headed for college and respectable, if not lucrative, careers. My other students were headed for assembly lines, gas stations, or the streets -- for drug trade or whatever other nonchoices the hopelessness they received from teachers like me suggested.

When I returned to graduate school and began to read theories of learning, social criticism, literary criticism, and so forth, I said, "Ah-ha!" A lightbulb went off in my head and things I had puzzled over began to make sense. Why, I asked, was I to wait until now to learn things that would have been so important to know then? Why was I sent into the schools well-equipped with subject matter knowledge but with no way to understand why what I was doing could be so harmful? I never even thought about what sense my students were making of the whole experience. Why, indeed, is a good question.

But my graduate professors had a good answer to this question. Their answer was, of course, that it did no good to teach theory prior to teaching experience. Students did not have the necessary framework on which to hang theory or new information -- nothing on which to understand what experienced teachers understand so easily. It made sense. I was absolved.

Yet, in the midst of years of school reform and curricular

change, we are still sending teachers into the schools ill prepared to understand or even question what sense students are making of their schooling experiences. While students are much better prepared than I was then to attend to processes of learning (i.e., we've given them the tools to teach reading and writing, even mathematics, as a process), still much of this learning is quickly curricularized and becomes routine, even thoughtless. Thinking while doing, or what Donald Schon calls "reflection-in-action" (xi) continues to escape many new teachers.

And if part of the answer to this problem lies in providing social theories to prospective teachers at the undergraduate level, it is only part of the answer. While readings on a "culture of silence" from Paulo Freire's Education for a Critical Consciousness or on the institutionalized structures of tracking from Giroux and McLaren's essay titled "Reproducing Reproduction: The Politics of Tracking" may be important, they are nearly impossible for undergraduate students in teacher education to unpack without more help than even the best teacher can provide. Perhaps it is, as my graduate teachers suggested, students' lack of experience; perhaps it is the coded language which results in abstraction rather than situation. Despite the reasons, many students cannot make the necessary leap to understand what those texts offer. But narrative helps; it provides a bridge; it creates a world that students can enter. Thus, when critical texts are read in concert with aesthetic texts, they can add a

range of perspective for students in teacher education. As students are invited to experience the world of teaching and schools vicariously through aesthetic texts (in addition to whatever field experiences may be available), they are better able to connect unfamiliar concepts either with what is remembered or with what is made apparent through narrative.

Hardy's work on storytelling/narrative seems especially relevant to differences in professional texts and aesthetic texts. She writes, "Narrative is not to be regarded as an aesthetic invention used by artists to control, manipulate, [or merely] order experience. . . (12). In other words, narrative particularizes experience and enlarges as well as personalizes issues.

Finally, the "generative" nature of a text gives it potential to generate particular ways of thinking, knowing, even criticizing. That is, generative texts often evoke stories -- readers' stories that relate personal connections to a text. Two modes of thought seem to characterize this process: critical/analytical thought and imaginative thought. Both are important for construing meaning. Both are important for locating ourselves in relation to the particular identities we have forged over time -- either in response to teachers we've had in school, in response to particular structures within schooling hierarchies we have experienced first hand, or in response to images we have internalized from films and television or from literature. Only when we recognize that the way we use language,

the way we relate to other people, and the way we see ourselves in the world is no accident but is, instead, a social construct, are we able to imagine other possibilities for ourselves and our practice. Examining our socially constructed identities may then lead us to question who we identify with and what or whom we resist. These seem to be especially important points of inquiry for prospective and experienced teachers and may be possible through extended conversation over a text like Lean on Me.

For example, after viewing this movie and thinking about students' voicing their pleasure or displeasure with the totalitarian rule of Joe Clark, I began to think of my junior high school principal. Though Mr. Browning did not have to police students in the ways that Joe Clark did, he was, nonetheless, easily as authoritarian in his delivery of punishment and discipline. While students debated whether or not Clark would have been capable of changing existing social conditions at the school under a more democratic rule, I faded in and out of my junior high experiences. I remembered having to stand in the hall during fifth-hour social studies class when I verbally objected to a male classmate who sat behind me and daily persisted to pick on me. I was singled out as the distraction; he, of course, offered no explanation. I was sent into the hall without a pass, and who should happen along but Mr. Browning. Striking fear in the hearts of junior-high schoolers and me at this moment, in particular, Mr. Browning said, "Come with me to the office, young lady." My mother was telephoned, and I was

sent home a little early. Extreme, it seems today, but Mr. Browning ran that school with an iron fist, and he had no discipline problems.

His wife was an English teacher; mine, in fact, and one of the best teachers in junior high. But it wasn't his wife who influenced me to want to teach English. With my own students' conversation in the background, still hotly debating the practicalities of democracy at Eastside High, I am drifting ahead to my eleventh-grade English teacher, Mrs. Blay. She was the first English teacher I strongly identified with. I liked her for several reasons; one of which was that I knew her personally before being assigned to her eleventh-grade English class. Because my mother sewed for her daughters, I had known Mrs. Blay for a long time. Strangely enough, I felt privileged in her class. She knew me and had been to my house. To me she was more than a teacher; Mrs. Blay was a real person.

She lectured on self-reliance and civil disobedience. Though I find this a strange irony today, then it was eloquent. She made me love Emerson and Thoreau. They were her favorites. They became my favorites too. I never questioned her mode of presentation. I do, however, remember thinking it odd that such a traditional teacher loved such revolutionary literature, and I think today that Mrs. Blay was aware of those conflicting interests and of her position or what she believed to be her role as English teacher. That her nature was often abrupt may have been both a symptom and an outcome of disruptive theories in

conflict with her practice. Nonetheless, she was the person who triggered my desire to be an English teacher though it was not until much later that I actually saw that as a possibility.

I also identified strongly with another American literature teacher many years later. Dr. Bigelow, an old New Englander, was an American literature professor at my undergraduate institution. I took every course he offered. In between lectures, he read to us. I used to hang on every word. Dr. Bigelow also seemed in contradiction to the traditional English professor, particularly when in came to legitimized forms of writing.

For example, in the first course I took from him (literature of the twenties), I produced a term paper which I perceived would suit his requirements. I became really involved in my project. It was on the Sacco-Vanzetti case. I read about the trial in newspapers from the late twenties stored in the microfilm collection. I read in one account that Edna St. Vincent Milay spent the night in jail on the eve of their execution to protest the court's decision. The struggle of two young men being tried for anarchy made my heart bleed.

Yet when I wrote the paper, I used only what the critics said about this issue. Though I had seldom felt this passionately about any issue, I kept my opinions to myself. I used the same strategies I had always used to produce good papers, and I expected this paper to be no different. I was sure it was an A paper. It received a C and a note to see Dr. Bigelow in his office. I visited his office with skepticism and a

renewed sense of fear. My perception of my position shifted once more as I humbled myself before this teacher whom I so admired and respected. His comments, however, were not what I had expected. He was kind and judicious. He asked me what I thought about the case, and I spewed forth with the same degree of passion that I felt while reading about the case. What came next was a total surprise. Dr. Bigelow said I should write the paper over and say what I had just told him, infusing all of the personal connections with the research I had done about the case and using critics responses only when they supported the points I wanted to make. Reflection, passion, and criticism all in one piece of writing. That stuck with me; his suggestions gave me permission to voice my concerns. Dr. Bigelow, like Mrs. Blay, had a powerful influence on my early teaching experiences. Knowing what I valued in practice also eventually led to knowing what I resisted.

Texts that generate such memories also have the potential to raise those memories to a level of critical consciousness. That is, they tend to encourage active theorizing of the why's that underpin nearly all experience. Suzanne Langer suggests that analytical thinking is simply a matter of seeing relationships. In this particular case, I saw a relationship between Mr. Browning and Joe Clark which in turn led to other thought patterns -- thought patterns that helped me to better understand my socially constructed identity. Again, until we begin to understand why we see the world in the particular ways that we

see it, we cannot begin to think how we might change either our position in the world or our practice. This fits with Ann Berthoff's notion that seeing relationships is also a matter of seeing the oppositions, juxtapositions, and coordinates in order to examine diversity. Until we think of ourselves and our world as socially constructed, then human agency is lost. And teachers more than most other groups of people need to see themselves as having agency to change that which is inequitable.

Thus, when analysis of our own experience engages the imagination, we become more capable of writing a new script, of creating a new image, of reconceptualizing what it is we are about. Connections which are linked to personal experiences and sometimes to other texts tend naturally to engage both the imagination and our powers of critical reasoning. For example, in a discussion of the movie, Stand and Deliver, this response, to Andy Garcia's saying that lowering standards for minority students is as discriminatory as making it harder, strikes a balance between critical/analytical and imaginative thinking, illustrating the generative nature of this text:

> I don't know why no one challenged him on the issue of standards. He [meaning Garcia, the representative from the testing service] did not realize that just the standard itself represented discrimination. Who established the standard? What criteria did they use? Struggling with poverty was the major focus of this movie: the homes-overcrowded, poorly furnished,

families -- both parents working, students working in the family business or at home so parents could work. Also, during the movie presentation, someone referred to the officials investigating the test results as the "salt & pepper team." Even though one was light and one was dark, this may have been an accurate label, due to the fact that they were African and Hispanic. The term salt and pepper was a popular way to refer to the police squad teams following the Detroit riots in 1967. In order to quell the well-founded charges of police brutality, the officials decided to create mixed teams of black and white officers. The term drifted north a bit in the late 60's and 70's. Then it was attached to the campus parties in which all the black dudes brought white dates. In neither case was salt and pepper a term of endearment. African Americans resented the harsh treatment still afforded them, now by some racially mixed police teams. In the spirit of black pride many African Americans particularly African American women resented inter-racial dating. [from transcript of class]

The nature of this response focuses on aspects of standards and who decides what standards are important. Note also after a few sentences, the student clicked into telling a story (i.e., "The term salt and pepper was a popular way. . ."). The next response follows immediately:

> Just to add to that, there was, I think, only one scene at the beginning of the movie showing resistance. I don't think that's quite realistic, for any classroom regardless of social-economic background. The teacher just walked in and after one day, coming in wearing a chef's hat, suddenly boom the kids are tuning in. [also verbatim transcript]

This movie is discussed in connection with several professional readings, some more critical than others. For example, with Mike Rose's text, Lives on the Boundary, I read to the class selected passages from Theory and Resistance in Education. Viewing/reading this popular film text along side an autobiographical text of Rose's own growing-up-poor story, with schooing experiences that describe what it is like to be dispossessed or disenfranchised, may have contributed to the discussion's focus on what the students in this story may have been understanding about their teacher, Mr. Escalante, about credentialing, and about the testing service. Lives on the Boundary describes Rose's successes and failures teaching minority students, many of whose schooling experiences mirrored his own. This combined with selected passages from Theory and Resistance seemed to evoked responses that were both critical and imaginative -- helping students connect the past with the present to plan for the future.

In other words, my own student teachers' attention seemed directed more toward the meanings students in the movie were

making of their experiences than with the technical aspects of what teachers taught and tests tested. The first response, in particular, lets us see a teacher-to-be questioning who sets standards and how those standards compare to economic structures. In the second response, though we hear the word resistance, what seems most important is the students' willingness to consider whether or not Heime Escalante's classroom is authentically described. The particular use of an expression like resistance, does not necessarily indicate a more critical response but may simply be the student's impressions about how to articulate this situation in ways that sound professional and well theorized. Regardless, the content of each segment seems to suggest a particular understanding of resistance and how it is related to the "real" world of schools and to students' own lives.

These two segments voicing students' connections to the movie, however, are in no way intended to be taken as evidence that using film as text in education courses will provide the necessary framework for helping teachers become more reflective in their practice. For this essay has not sought to provide evidence and pronounce solutions; instead, it means to suggest possibilities for alternative practices. Thus, the response segments are added to illuminate the generative nature of narrative especially as it is combined with professional readings; that is, the two segments help to illustrate the power of narrative to evoke emotional response that is connected to personal experience as the lens provided by the professional

reading helps structure that response into a critique. Discussion that takes the form of stories (as in the first segment) provides students with the opportunity to rehearse or try-out what they're thinking through narration -- a format which seems natural when we share experiences. Or as Shor and Freire suggests, it is an opportunity for students to discover or "know that [they] know" (99).

Conclusion

By providing learning opportunities that infuse the imagination with whatever we happen to be teaching, we are showing that we consider both the social and the intellectual worlds of students as integral to our educational agendas. Narrative, then, helps connect us and what we know to other people, places, and things. For as language is the tool of story making, story making is the tool of culture making (Wells). And the culture of teaching and schooling is created by the stories shared within.

Questions about teachers' beliefs and how teachers see the practice of schooling are integral to curriculum reform in preservice teacher education. As students are called upon to explore their own personal histories, their social, political, economic, and cultural realities through a curriculum of multiple voices, their predispositions become more apparent. Recognizing what one believes is important; how those beliefs impinge upon future practices is another matter and may depend upon how we approach teacher education.

Cultural studies with particular emphasis on pairing a variety of professional and aesthetic texts, including films and television, may arouse tensions to a point where students willingly question the nature of specific schooling practices -- practices which tend to marginalize, dehumanize, and deskill. With professional readings that form a social critique of meanings and practices, film and television stories can provide another lens for seeing issues of power, ideology, and culture. Stories examined in concert with professional readings become more than a literary or pop cultural experience. Stories can, indeed, illumine our past, help us rediscover truths about ourselves, and lead the way for making culture. Additionally, they have the potential to elicit our own stories of schooling which may, indeed, provoke reflection. For as Barbara Hardy writes, "It is hard to stop telling stories. . . .[They are] the continuation of remembering, dreaming, and planning that is imposed on the uncertain, attenuated, interrupted, and unpredictable. . .flow of happenings" (14, 23).

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